(Mount Clipping In Space Below)

Witness Loses Squad Car Ride To Buy Whiskey

By CHARLES EDMUNDSON

There are limits beyond which the Memphis Police Department will not go in the surveillance of a key witness in an important murder trial.

Chief of Police Henry Lux said last night the three-shift bodyguard assigned to protect Charles Quitman Stephens, 57-year-old witness in the James Earl Ray murder trial, was told to quit providing him transportation after he insisted they take him to a liquor store in a squad car.

"Under certain conditions the bodyguards were giving Mr. Stephens police transportation to make surveillance easier," Chief Lux said. "After he wanted a car used to go for liquor, I told the guard not to take him anywhere in a squad car."

Mr. Stephens is said to have seen a man run from the second floor of a South Main rooming house just after the fatal shooting April 4 of Martin Luther King Jr.

Mr. Stephens was kept in protective custody in the Shelby County Jail for 30 days ending Aug. 21. Although this was done "to keep him from being disposed of," according to an assistant attorney general, Mr. Stephens was freed on habeas corpus proceedings.

There was testimony in that hearing that Mr. Stephens has a drinking problem. The police bodyguard has been maintained since Mr. Stephens left jail. Chief Lux said his order on transportation will be carried out in such a way as not to diminish Mr. Stephen's protection, but he would not elaborate.

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